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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

















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REMARKS  
OF  
HON. DANIEL WEBSTER,

*In the Senate of the United States, June 17, 1850. Together with Mr. Webster's  
Letter to Robert H. Gardiner, esq., and other citizens of Maine.*

The Senate having under consideration the Compromise bill, the pending question being an amendment offered by Mr. SOULE, of Louisiana:


Mr. WEBSTER said:

On the 7th of March, sir, I declared my opinion to be, that there is not a square rod of territory belonging to the United States, the character of which, for slavery or no slavery, is not already fixed by some irrevocable law. I remain of that opinion. The opinion, sir, has been a good deal canvassed in the country, and there have been complaints—sometimes respectful and decorous, and sometimes so loud and so empty as to become mere clamor. But I have met with no argument upon any question of law embraced in that opinion, which shakes the firmness with which I hold it, nor have I heard any discussion upon any matter of fact, as to that part of the opinion which rests on facts, which leads me to doubt the accuracy of my conclusions as to that part of the opinion which regarded the true construction, or I might with more propriety say, almost the literal meaning, of the resolutions by which Texas was admitted into the Union. I have heard no argument calculated, in the slightest degree, to alter that opinion. The committee, I believe, with one accord, concurred in it. A great deal of surprise, real or affected, has been expressed in the country at the announcement by me of that opinion, as if there were something new in it. Yet there need have been no surprise, for there was nothing new in it. Other gentlemen have expressed the same opinion more than once; and I myself, in a speech made here on the 23d day of March, 1848, expressed the same opinion, almost in the same words, with which nobody here found any fault; at which nobody here cavilled or made question, and nobody in the country.

With respect to the other ground on which my opinion is founded, that is, the high improbability, in point of fact, that African slavery could be introduced and established in any of the Territories acquired by us in pursuance of the late treaty with Mexico, I have learned nothing, heard nothing, from that day to this, that has not entirely confirmed that opinion. That being my judgment on this matter, I voted very readily and cheerfully to exclude what is called the Wilmot Proviso from these Territorial bills, or to keep it out, rather, when a motion was made to introduce it. I did so, upon a very full and deep conviction that no act of Congress, no provision of law, was necessary in any degree for that purpose; that there were natural and sufficient reasons and causes excluding forever African slavery from those regions. That was my judgment, and I acted on it; and it is my judgment still. Those who think differently, will, of course, pursue a different line of conduct, in accordance with their own judgments. That was my opinion then, and it has been strengthened by every thing that I have learned since, and I have no more apprehension to-day of the introduction or establishment of African slavery in these Territories, than I have of its introduction into, and establishment in, Massachusetts.

Well, sir, I have voted not to place in these Territorial bills what is called the Wilmot Proviso, and by that vote having signified a disposition to exclude the prohibition, as a thing unnecessary, I am now called upon to vote upon this amendment, moved by the honorable member from Louisiana, (Mr. SOULE,) which provides that the States formed out of New Mexico and Utah shall have the right and privilege of making their own constitutions, and of presenting those constitutions to Congress conformably to the Constitution of the United States, with or without a prohibition against slavery, as the people of those Territories, about to become States, may see fit to declare. I have not seen much practical utility in this amendment, I agree. Nevertheless, if I should vote, now that it is presented to me, against it, it might leave me open to

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suspicion of intending, or wishing, to see that accomplished in another way hereafter, which I did not choose to see accomplished by the introduction of the Wilmot Proviso. That is to say, it might seem as if, voting against that form of exclusion or prohibition, I might be willing still that there should be a chance hereafter to enforce it in some other way. Now, I think that ingenuousness and steadiness of purpose, under these circumstances, compel me to vote for the amendment, and I shall vote for it. I do it exactly on the same grounds that I voted against the introduction of the proviso. And let it be remembered, that I am now speaking of New Mexico and Utah, and other territories acquired from Mexico; and of nothing else. I confine myself to these; and, as to them, I say, that I see no occasion to make a provision against slavery now, or to reserve to ourselves the right of making such provision hereafter. All this rests on the most thorough conviction that, under the law of nature, there never can be slavery in these Territories. This is the foundation of all. And I voted against the proviso, and I vote now in favor of this amendment, for the reason that all restrictions are unnecessary, absolutely unnecessary; and as such restrictions give offence, and create a kind of resentment, as they cause a degree of dissatisfaction, and as I desire to avoid all dissatisfaction as far as I can, by avoiding all measures that cause it, and which are in my judgment wholly unnecessary, I shall vote now as I voted on a former occasion, and shall support the amendment offered by the honorable member from Louisiana. I repeat again, I do it upon the exact grounds upon which I declared, upon the 7th day of March, that I should resist the Wilmot Proviso—the precise grounds.

Sir, it does not seem to strike other Senators as it strikes me, but if there be any qualification to that general remark which I made, or the opinion which I expressed on the 7th of March, that every foot of territory of the United States has a fixed character for slavery or no slavery; if there be any qualification to that remark, it has arisen here, from what seems to be an indisposition to define the boundaries of New Mexico; that is all the danger there is. All that is part of Texas was by the resolutions of 1845 thrown under the general character of Texan territory; and if, for want of defining the boundaries of New Mexico by any proceeding or process hereafter, or by any event hereafter, let me say to gentlemen, that if any portion which they or I do not believe to be Texas should be considered to become Texas, then, so far, that qualification of my remark is applicable. And therefore, I do feel, as I had occasion to say two or three days ago, that it is of the utmost importance to pass this bill, to the end that there may be a definitive boundary, fixed now, and fixed forever, between the territory of New Mexico and Texas, or the limits of New Mexico and the limits of Texas. Here the question lies. If gentlemen wish to act efficiently for their own purposes, here it is, in my poor judgment, that they are called upon to act. And the thing to be done, and done at once, is to fix the boundaries of New Mexico.

Mr. President, when I see gentlemen from my own part of the country, no doubt from motives of the highest character, and for most conscientious purposes, not concurring in any of these great questions with myself, I am aware that I am taking on myself an uncommon degree of responsibility. The fact that gentlemen with whom I have been accustomed to act in the Senate took a different view of their own duties in the same case, naturally led me to reconsider my own course, to re-examine my own opinions, to re-judge my own judgment. And now, sir, that I have gone through this process, without prejudice, as I hope—and certainly I have done so under the greatest feeling of regret, at being called upon by a sense of duty to take a course which may dissatisfy some to whom I should always be desirous of rendering my public course and every event and action of my public life acceptable—yet I cannot part from my own settled opinions. I leave consequences to themselves. It is a great emergency, a great exigency that this country is placed in. I shall endeavor to preserve a proper regard to my own consistency; but I shall, nevertheless, perform what I believe to be a high duty, promptly and fearlessly. And here let me say, that neither here nor elsewhere has any thing been advanced to show that on this subject I have said or done any thing inconsistent, in the slightest degree, with any speech, or sentiment, or letter, or declaration that I ever delivered in my life; and all would be convinced of this, if men would stop to consider, and look at real differences and distinctions. But where all is general denunciation, where all is clamor, where all is idle and empty declamation, where there is no search after exact truth, no honest disposition to inquire whether one opinion is different from the other—why, every body, in that way of proceeding, may be proclaimed to be inconsistent.

Now, sir, I do not take the trouble to answer things of this sort that appear in the public press. I know it would be useless. Those who are of an unfriendly disposition would not publish my explanations or distinctions, if I were to make them. But, sir, if any gentleman here has any thing to say on this subject—though I throw out no challenge—yet, if any gentleman here chooses to undertake the task—and many there possibly are, who think it an easy task—to show in what respect any thing that I said in debate here on the 7th of March, or any thing contained in my letter to the gentlemen of Newburyport, or any where else, is inconsistent with any recorded opinion of mine, since the subject of the annexation of Texas began in 1837, I will certainly answer him with great respect and courtesy, and shall be content to stand or fall by the judgment of the country.

Sir, my object is peace. My object is reconciliation. My purpose is, not to make up a case for the North, or to make up a case for the South. My object is not to continue useless and irritating controversies. I am against agitators, North and South. I am against local ideas, North and South, and against all narrow and local contests. I am an American, and I know no locality in America that is my country. My heart, my sentiments, my judgment, demand of me that I shall pursue such a course as shall promote the good, and the harmony, and the Union of the whole country. This I shall do, God willing, to the end of the chapter.

The honorable Senator resumed his seat amidst general applause from the gallery.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

#### TO THE HON. DANIEL WEBSTER:

The subscribers, inhabitants of the cities and towns on Kennebec river, though not your immediate constituents, yet, as citizens of our common Republic, cannot refrain from expressing to you the deep sense of the obligation which you have conferred upon the whole country, by your recent effort in the Senate of the United States to allay the spirit of sectional strife which threatened the destruction of our Union. No confederated States, either in ancient or modern times, have been preserved from intestine commotion and civil war. If, as some suppose, we are confederated States, still we are only an exception to the general rule, and it is but a short time since that the slavery question threatened to bring those evils upon us; and should the South and the North be separated, no human wisdom could predict the evils that would follow. We have been induced to offer this expression of our feelings from observing the obloquy cast upon you by a portion of the press in this State. The press may convey the excited feelings of the moment, but those feelings frequently arise from an ardent desire to effect what is deemed a great good, irrespective of consequences; but we feel confident that reflecting minds, and those which permanently guide public opinion, will eventually have their influence, and that the patriotism and courage of that statesman will be generally acknowledged, who, regardless of consequences to himself, boldly threw himself into the breach, and brought back his countrymen to feel the invaluable blessings of the Union, and the duty imposed upon them for its preservation.

#### GARDINER, April, 1850.

R. H. Gardiner,	John P. Hunter,	E. G. Byram,	Edward Swan,
A. T. Perkins,	Wm. H. Byram,	F. Allen,	L. Clay,
Samuel B. Tarbox,	Benjamin Shaw,	F. P. Theobald,	Samuel C. Grant,
H. Tupper,	G. W. Bachelder,	F. K. Swan,	Arthur Berry.

#### HALLOWELL.

John Merrick,	Jas. Sherburne,	Thos. B. Brooks,	Rufus R. Page,
Jesse Aikin,	A. Pease,	James C. Dwight,	John Johnson,
W. S. Marshall,	Peter Atherton,	J. Gardner,	S. Davenport,
C. H. Strickland,	J. S. P. Dument,	T. M. Andrews,	F. Glazier,
Eben Horn,	W. M. Vaughn.		

#### AUGUSTA.

William Woart,	Hanson Baker,	Thos. Lambert,	Henry Williams,
J. J. Eveleth,	J. A. Thompson,	Geo. W. Morton,	James Bridge,
Allen Lambert,	D. Williams,	D. C. Stanwood,	Cyrus Briggs,
G. W. Stanley,	William Bryan,	Jonathan Hedge,	David Fales.

#### BATH.

Wm. Ledyard	Jonathan Hyde,	J. W. Ellingwood,	Wm. D. Sewell,
Ebenezer Clap,	Gilbert Trufant,	Geo. F. Patten,	John Patten,
J. C. L. Booker,	Henry Hyde,	R. H. McKown,	John H. Kimball,
J. H. McLellan,	B. C. Bailey,	Thos. M. Reed,	Alden Morse,
William Morse,	John E. Brown,	F. Clark,	Wm. M. Rogers.

### *Reply of Mr. Webster.*

WASHINGTON, June 17, 1850.

GENTLEMEN: Your friendly and acceptable letter of April was received.

It is true, gentlemen, that I have made an effort in the Senate "to allay the spirit of sectional strife, which has threatened the destruction of our Union;" and such efforts I shall continue to make, earnestly, and with whatever ability I possess, under a deep conviction that that "spirit of sectional strife," if not checked, will ere long drive the country into a lamentable and disastrous condition. It is exceedingly to be regretted, that any part of the public press in the State



in which you reside, or elsewhere, should discourage, and, as it often does, denounce all attempts at reconciliation and peace; and should contribute, by its daily effusions, to promote ill-will, resentment, and angry contests between the North and South. That all this is done by a portion of the press, both North and South, is but too true. The conductors of these presses would seem to have lost all sense of a common country, all sentiments of patriotism, unless there may be patriotism in those local feelings, in which the great Father of his Country so affectionately admonished us never to indulge. That the conductors of these presses mistake the opinions of the people, to a very considerable extent, I doubt not; but while they are so active and so zealous, who can tell how far, or how fast, their sentiments may spread?

It is no longer to be doubted, that there are persons both in the North and in the South, who are opposed to the existence of the present Constitution of the United States, and would gladly see it brought to an end. Some in both extremes openly avow this wish, and others conceal it under very thin disguises. Nevertheless, the great body of the people, North and South, are firmly attached to the Union; their hearts are for it, and with it, and they will defend it against all open attempts for its overthrow. This is my decided opinion. The Union, therefore, we may hope, will not be rudely broken up; but this spirit of sectional strife, if it be not effectually rebuked, will produce infinite mischiefs, by embarrassing the Government, thwarting and defeating useful legislation, and increasing, more and more, feelings of discord and alienation. Who does not see, already, the alarming consequences provoked and produced by these dissensions? We are now in the seventh month of the session of Congress, and what has been done? Even the ordinary annual appropriation bills have not been brought forward, or advanced a single stage. They are at least four months behind the proper time. It has at last become indispensably necessary, it seems to me, that men of sense and intelligence, who are really lovers of their country and its Union, should open their eyes to the state of things. There will be, there must be, it is in the nature of things that there should be, some shock, some cessation in the movement of the Government, some disreputable irregularity, now not far ahead, unless the good men of the country, in all its parts, will rouse themselves to the performance of the duties which the exigency demands.

While so many persons and so many presses in the North maintain such loud and bitter complaints against the South, and while so many persons and so many presses in the South utter complaints equally loud and bitter against the North, neither the North nor the South states, definitely and precisely, any actual grievance, such as could justify, in any reasonable man's opinion, the most distant idea of disunion. For the most part, these mutual complaints are general, indeterminate, uttered in angry terms, but placed on no specific ground. In the speech to which your letter refers, I have mentioned what I think to be the real ground of mutual or reciprocal complaint; but, beyond all these, there is kept up a general cry of one party against the other, that its rights are invaded, its honor insulted, its character assailed, and its just participation in political power denied. Sagacious men cannot but suspect, from all this, that more is intended than is avowed; and that there lies at the bottom a purpose of the separation of the States, for reasons avowed or disavowed, or for grievances redressed or unredressed. This purpose, be it remembered, I do not consider as pervading large masses, but of its existence among the *Extremists*, on both sides, I cannot entertain a question.

In the speech to which you refer, it was my purpose, among other things, to show that a peaceable secession of some States from the rest, or a peaceable separation of them all, was among the most improbable of imaginable events; that nature, the seas, the gulfs, the lakes, and the rivers, bound us together by ties nearly impossible to be broken; that no man could make any plan of secession or separation satisfactory to others; and, more than all, that no man could discern any thing as likely to arise to any State, from secession or separation, not fraught with political evil of every description, and every degree. And notwithstanding the influence and the opinions of which I have spoken, I believe that the sentiments of the great mass of Southern men concur with my own. Many have contemplated separation as a probable result; some certainly have desired, and do desire it; but, so far as I have observed, when the question is put directly home to the people, notwithstanding whatever certain presses and certain politicians say to the contrary, the people of the South are still for the Union by immense majorities. Wherever there is a truly American heart, the love of the Union is entwined in its inmost fibres. It is our duty to encourage and applaud this popular feeling; to respect it ourselves, and to take care that, by no denial of justice, by no unnecessary discussion of exciting but abstract questions, by no threat or menace to *interfere with what does not belong to us*, we do not weaken that attachment to the Union which is so indispensable to the happiness of all. And what is the duty of the North, in this respect, is equally the duty of the South. All sides are called on to exercise a far greater degree of forbearance and moderation, if we mean to transmit to the next generation the blessings enjoyed by this.

I shall do all I can to warn the country against the dangers of this intestine strife; to call both the South and the North back to a sense of their true duties and their true interests. And if I cannot allay the evil, I shall at least do nothing to promote it. I shall do nothing to cause jealousy, heartburning, and animosity, among those whose country is one, whose interests are

one, and whose destiny, whatever any of them may think of it, is, in my opinion, one; one now, and one hereafter.

Gentlemen, one of the exciting questions of the present moment respects the necessity of excluding slavery, by law, from the territories lately acquired from Mexico. If I believed in any such necessity, I should, of course, support such a law. I could not do otherwise, consistently with opinions very many times expressed, and which opinions I have no inclination to change, and shall not change. But I do not believe in any such necessity. I have studied the geography of New Mexico diligently, having read all that I could find in print, and inquired of many intelligent persons who have been in the country, traversed it, and become familiar with it.

New Mexico may be considered as divided into two parts: one lying on the east side of the Rio Grande, below the Paso del Norte—this is claimed by Texas; the other extends along the river, on both sides, from Paso del Norte to the forty-second degree of north latitude, or the boundary of Oregon. Of this part, also, that which lies on the eastern side of the river is claimed by Texas. The whole extent of both parts can hardly be less than one thousand miles, and by the windings of the river much more. The southern part is far less mountainous than the northern; it has, nevertheless, mountain peaks and mountain ridges. From San Antonio de Bexar, which is a hundred miles north of the Gulf of Mexico, and near the western line of the actual settlements in Texas, it is five hundred and seventy miles to Paso del Norte, by a track or road, recently explored, keeping east of the Rio del Norte, and south of the Guadalupe mountains; the general direction of which road is west by north. This whole country is of very little value. The mountains are barren, and a great portion of the more level country is a mere desert of rocks and sand. Sometimes prairies are met with, producing grass in more or less abundance; but the decisive and fatal characteristic of the country is the want of water. In traversing this region, travellers not unfrequently find themselves without water for twenty or thirty miles, and sometimes even for longer distances. I think an exploring expedition, which within the last year passed along this route, found no water for seventy miles. It may be truly said, that here is a country of six hundred miles in extent, which, in its general character, must be described as a barren desert. I agree, that in a considerable part of this desert, African slave labor is not necessarily excluded by the law of climate; the climate is mild enough; but, then, *all labor*, free or slave, all cultivation whatever, is excluded, for all time, by the sterility of the soil, throughout this vast arid region. There may be trifling exceptions here and there on the banks of some of the streams; but the general character, without doubt or question, is such as I have represented it. Major Gaines, a very intelligent gentleman, lately a member of Congress, and now Governor of Oregon, traversed a part of this country during the Mexican war, and this is his description of it:

"The country, from the Nueces to the valley of the Rio Grande, is poor, sterile, sandy and barren, with not a single tree of any size or value on our whole route. The only tree which we saw was the musquit tree, and very few of these. The musquit is a small tree, resembling an old and decayed peach tree. The whole country may be truly called a perfect waste, uninhabited and uninhabitable. There is not a drop of running water between the two rivers, except in the two small streams of San Salvador and Santa Gertrudis, and these only contain water in the rainy season. Neither of them had running water when we passed them. The chaparral commences within forty or fifty miles of the Rio Grande. This is poor, rocky, and sandy; covered with prickly pear, thistles, and almost every sticking thing, constituting a thick and perfectly impenetrable undergrowth. For any useful or agricultural purpose the country is not worth a sou.

"So far as we are able to form any opinion of this desert upon the other routes which had been traversed, its character, everywhere between the two rivers, is pretty much the same. We learned that the route pursued by General Taylor south of ours, was through a country similar to that through which we passed; as also was that travelled by General Wool from San Antonio to Presidio, on the Rio Grande. From what we both saw and heard, the whole command came to the conclusion which I have already expressed, that it was worth *nothing*. I have no hesitation in saying, that I would not hazard the life of one valuable and useful man for every foot of land between San Patricio and the valley of the Rio Grande. The country is not now, and can never be, of the *slightest value*."

The most lamented and distinguished gentleman and officer, the late Colonel Hardin, of Illinois, entirely concurs with Major Gaines. Here is his account:

"The whole country is miserably watered. Large districts have no water at all. The streams are small, and at great distances apart. One day we marched, on the road from Monclova to Parras, thirty-five miles without water; a pretty severe day's march for infantry.

"Grass is very scarce; and, indeed, there is none at all in many regions for miles square. Its place is supplied with prickly pear and thorny bushes. There is not one acre in two hundred—more probably not one in five hundred—of all the land we have seen in Mexico, which can ever be cultivated; the greater part of it is the most desolate region I could ever have ima-

gined. The pure granite hills of New England are a paradise to it, for they are without the thorny briars and venomous reptiles which infest the barbed barrenness of Mexico. The good land and cultivated spots in Mexico are but dots on the map. Were it not that it takes so very little to support a Mexican, and that the land which is cultivated yields its produce with little labor, it would be surprising how its sparse population is sustained. All the towns we have visited, with, perhaps, the exception of Parras, are depopulating, as is also the whole country."

The country higher up, that is, along the Rio del Norte, from Paso del Norte to Santa Fé and Taos, is different in this respect. Through this part of New Mexico the river runs between immense mountains, with strips or ribands of land along its banks, not always continuous, but which are cultivated with grains, but only by means of irrigation. Allow me, gentlemen, to lay before you the creditable, the exact, the authoritative description given by Mr. Smith, the delegate from New Mexico:

"New Mexico is an exceedingly mountainous country, Santa Fé itself being twice as high as the highest point of the Alleghanies, and nearly all the land capable of cultivation is of equal height, though some of the valleys have less altitude above the sea. The country is cold. Its general agricultural products are wheat and corn, and such vegetables as grow in the Northern States of this Union. It is entirely unsuited for slave labor. Labor is exceedingly abundant and cheap. It may be hired for three or four dollars per month, in quantity quite sufficient for carrying on all the agriculture of the Territory. There is no cultivation except by irrigation, and there is not a sufficiency of water to irrigate all the land.

"As to the existence, at present, of slavery in New Mexico, it is the general understanding that it has been altogether abolished by the laws of Mexico; but we have no established tribunals which have pronounced, as yet, what the law of the land in this respect is. It is universally considered, however, that the Territory is altogether a free Territory. I know of no persons in the country who are treated as slaves, except such as may be servants to gentlemen visiting or passing through the country. I may add that the strongest feeling against slavery universally prevails through the whole Territory, and I suppose it quite impossible to convey it there, and maintain it by any means whatever."

My speech was delivered on the 7th of March. Speaking of what I thought the impossibility of the existence of African slavery in New Mexico, I said: "I would not take pains uselessly to reaffirm an ordinance of nature, or to re-enact the will of God." Everybody knew that, by the "will of God," I meant that expression of the divine purpose in the work of creation which had given such a physical formation to the earth, in this region, as necessarily to exclude African slavery from it forever. Everybody knew I meant this, and meant nothing else. To represent me as speaking in any other sense was gross injustice. Yet a pamphlet has been put into circulation, in which it is said that my remark is "undertaking to settle by mountains and rivers, and not by the Ten Commandments, the question of human duty." "Cease to transcribe," it adds, "upon the statute book what our wisest and best men believed to be the will of God, in regard to our worldly affairs, and the passions which we think appropriate to devils will soon take possession of society." One hardly knows which most to condemn, the nonsense or the dishonesty of such commentaries on another's words. I know no passion more appropriate to devils than the passion for gross misrepresentation and libel. And others, from whom more fairness might have been expected, have not failed to represent me as arguing, or affording ground of argument, against human laws to enforce the moral laws of the Deity. Such persons knew my meaning very well. They chose to pervert and misrepresent it. That is all.

In classical times, there was a set of small, but rapacious critics, denominated *captatores verborum*, who snatched and caught at particular expressions; expended their strength on the *disjecta membra* of language; birds of rapine, who preyed on words and syllables, and gorged themselves with feeding on the garbage of phrases, chopped, dislocated, and torn asunder, by themselves, as flesh and limbs are by the claws of unclean birds. Such critics are rarely more distinguished for ability in discussion, than for that manly moral feeling which disdains to state an adversary's argument otherwise than fairly and truly, and as he meant to be understood.

But other gentlemen, of much more acquaintance with New Mexico, than I can pretend to, have expressed the same opinion as I have done, in respect to the natural causes which must forever exclude slavery from that country; and it has been thought remarkable that an intelligent field officer in the American army, in writing a private letter to a friend here, dated at Santa Fé, the capital of New Mexico, two days before my speech was delivered, that is, on the 5th of March, should have used this language:

"We have no papers later than the President's message. I fancy Congress is debating about slavery in New Mexico, where *slavery is prohibited by a stronger than all human laws—the law of climate, and production, and self interest.* Not more than a hundredth part of New Mexico could ever be cultivated, if water were ever so plenty, such is the soil, topography, and rock of this land. But in the centre of a vast area, without large bodies of water, the rocky surface sending what little water falls upon it rapidly down to the ocean, under an atmosphere ever thirsty,



into which evaporation is marvellously rapid, not more than one part in two hundred and fifty can ever be improved."

And now, gentlemen, I have one other consideration to bring to your minds; and that is, that the slavery of the African race does not exist in New Mexico; that it is altogether abolished; that there is not a single African slave to be found among any of its mountains, or in any part of its vast plains. And the people of Mexico, to a man, are opposed to slavery; their State of society rejects it; the use of cheaper labor rejects it; the opinions, the sentiments, and feelings of the people, all reject it, as warmly and decidedly as it is rejected by the people of Maine.

And it appears to me just about as probable that African slavery will be introduced into New Mexico, and there established, as it is that the same slavery will be established on Mars' Hill, or the side of the White Mountains.

Among the maxims left us by Lord Bacon, one is, that when seditions or discontents arise in the State, the part of wisdom is, to remove, by all means possible, the causes. The surest way to prevent discontents, if the times will bear it, he says, is to take away the matter of them; for if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire. So counsels Lord Bacon; but with us there are other advisers. Although the dispute be obviously altogether unimportant, and although the times will well bear the taking away of the matter of it, *their* patriotic ardor still admonishes us to continue the contest—to fight it out; if the oyster be gone, still to make fierce battle for the shell; nor give up the warfare, till we obtain a joyful victory, or shall nobly fall.

Gentlemen, I will conclude this letter by a short reference to one other topic. A good deal of complaint has been manifested, as you know, on account of the opinions expressed in my speech respecting Texas, and the legal construction and effect of the resolutions by which she became annexed to the United States. Surprise and astonishment, and all the eloquence of capital letters and notes of admiration, have been summoned to mark the utterance of such new and startling sentiments. The truth is, however, that there is nothing new in the whole matter. The same view, substantially, of the resolutions of annexation had been taken, again and again, by myself and others.

Gentlemen, I voted against the treaty by which these Territories were ceded by Mexico to the United States; and in open Senate, in a speech made on the 23d of March, 1848, I referred to Texas and to the resolutions of annexation. The speech was published in the newspapers, and circulated in pamphlet form, and read by every body who chose to read it. In that speech you will find these words:

"Now, sir, I do not depend on theory. I ask you and I ask the Senate and the country to look at facts, to see where we were when we made the departure three years ago, and where we now are, and I shall leave it to imagination to conjecture where we shall be.

"We admitted Texas as one State for the present. But if you will refer to the resolutions providing for the annexation of Texas, you will find a provision that it shall be in the power of Congress hereafter to make *four* other new States out of Texan territory. Present and prospectively, therefore, *five* new States, sending *ten* Senators, may come into the Union out of Texas. Three years ago we did that. Now we propose to make two States; for, undoubtedly, if we take what the President recommends, New Mexico and California each will make a State; so that there will be *four* Senators. We shall have then, in this new territory, seven States, sending *fourteen* Senators to this chamber. Now, what will be the relation between the Senate and the people, or the States from which they come?"

You will see that here is the same opinion of the meaning of the Resolutions of Annexation, expressed nearly in the same words, as are contained in my speech of the 7th of March last. And this only two years ago. But nobody then expressed either surprise or astonishment. There was no call to arms, no invocation of the Genius of Liberty, to resist a false construction of an act of Congress; no stirring and rousing paragraphs in the newspapers; no patriotic appeals to the people, and no insane declarations, such as we now hear, that the Texan Resolutions are utterly void.

But, gentlemen, I will pursue no further a topic of some little interest to myself, but of no great importance to you, or the country. I leave it, with the single remark, that what was true, in respect to the construction of an act of Congress in 1848, must be true, in the same case, in 1850; and if an individual, on his own authority, may declare one act of Congress void, he may, with equal propriety, absolve himself from the obligations imposed on him by all other acts; and his oath binds him only to the observance of such laws as he himself approves. How far such a sentiment is fit to be acted upon by men, or to be instilled into the minds of youth, the country must judge.

But you, and the whole country, gentlemen, are interested most deeply, in knowing what is the prospect of a settlement of existing difficulties.

On this point, I am happy to say, that I can speak with hope, if not with confidence. I think

I see indications that the public judgment will, ere long, be brought to bear upon these troublesome and exciting questions, and that the voice of a majority of the people will hush other discordant voices. How soon this will happen, I cannot say ; but I fully believe that the floods will yet subside, that the troubled waters will return within their banks, and the current of public affairs resume its accustomed and beneficial course.

I am, gentlemen, your obliged fellow-citizen and obedient servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

ROBERT H. GARDINER, esq., and others, *Gardiner, Maine.*





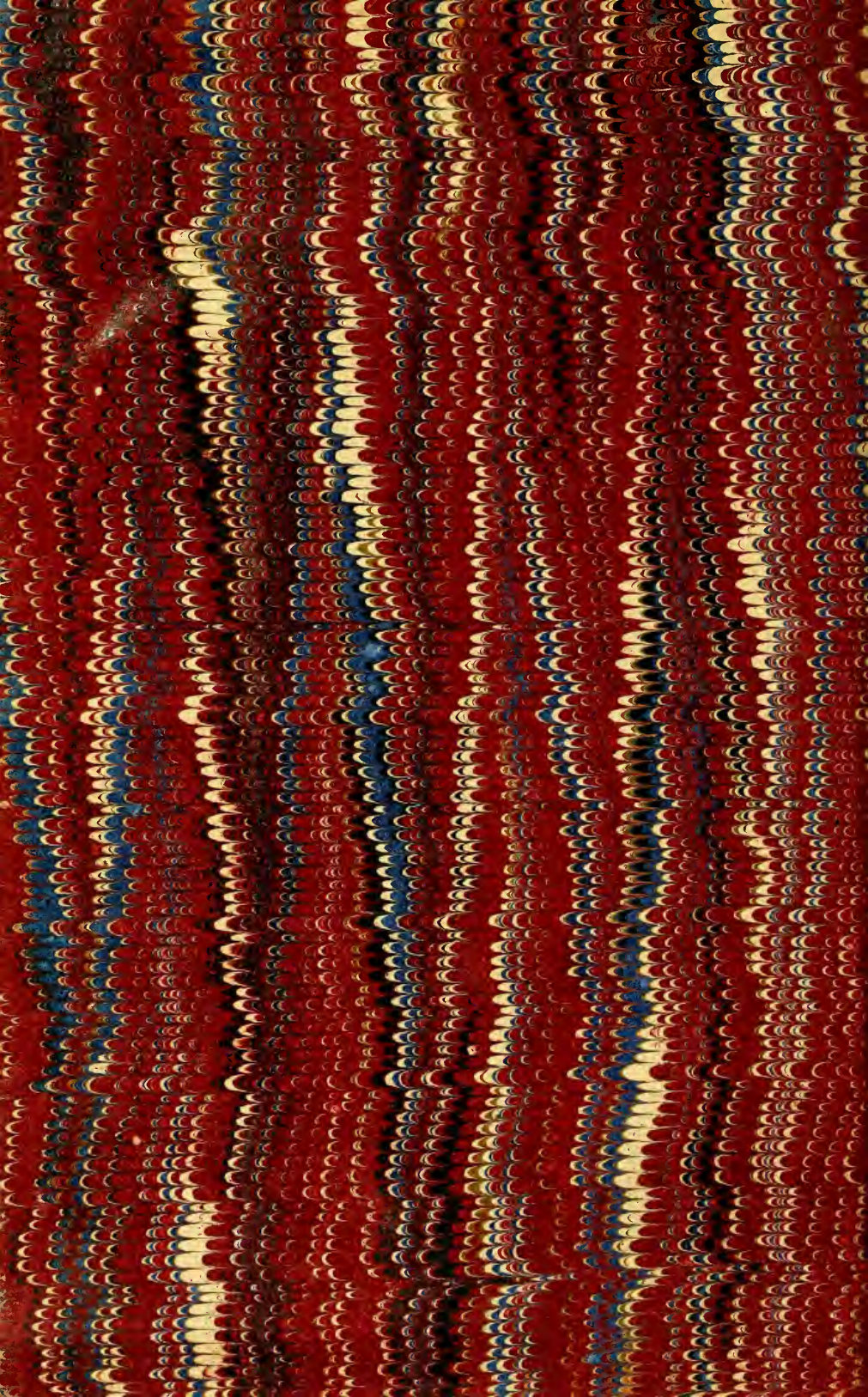




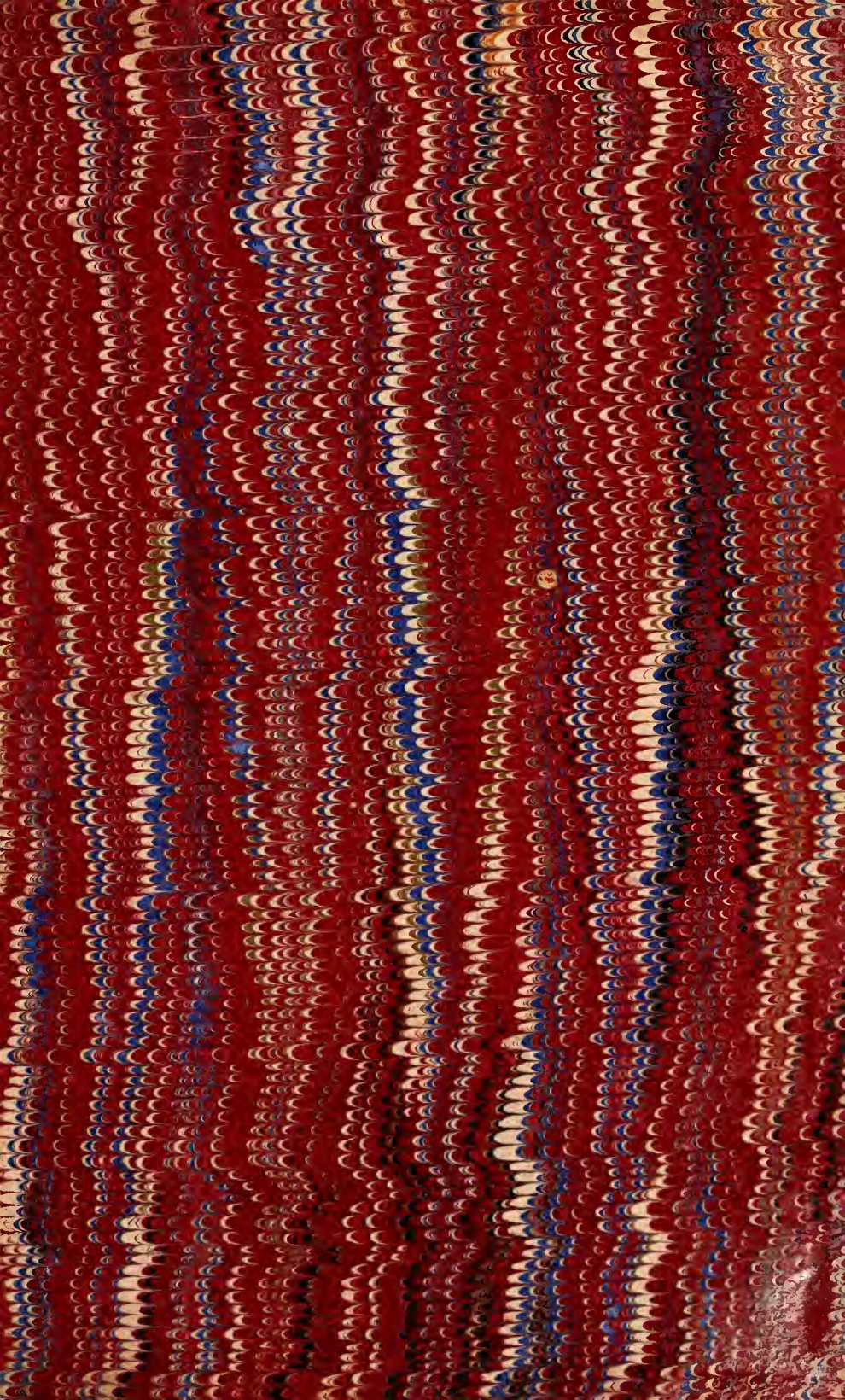














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